

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DODE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8577

INFO FAA WASHDC

FAA BRUSSELS

DOT WASHDC

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 01523

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, FR, UK, US

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - CONCORDE

REF: LONDON 1166

1. BRITISH UNDERSTAND IT IS SECRETARY COLEMAN'S INTENTION TO RELEASE HIS DECISION ON CONCORDE AT PRESS CONFERENCE AROUND NOON WASHINGTON TIME ON FEB. 4 AND THAT TEXT OF DECISION MAY RUN TO 50 OR MORE PAGES. KEN BINNING, DIRECTOR GENERAL/CONCORDE HAS TALKED TO US AND WRITTEN TO EMBASSY IMPORTUNING US FOR ARRANGEMENTS FOR UK OFFICIALS TO HAVE ADVANCE NOTICE ON DECISION. NEWS OF CONCORDE DECISION WILL DOUBTLESS BE LEAD ITEM ON TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAMS (AT 2100Z AND 2200Z) ON FEB. 4 AND IN MORNING NEWSPAPERS ON FEB. 5. BRITISH BELIEVE IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT MINISTER OF STATE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONCORDE PROJECT (KAUFMAN) ISSUE A STATEMENT ON COLEMAN DECISION EVENING OF FEB. 4 FOR NEWS BROADCASTS AND NEWSPAPERS. TO HANDLE SITUATION IN
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RESPONSIBLE MANNER, IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT

KAUFMAN HAVE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT OF COLEMAN DOCUMENT, INCLUDING DATA AND ARGUMENTATION USED IN SUPPORT OF DECISION TAKEN. BRITISH THEREFORE URGENTLY REQUEST THAT COPY OF COLEMAN DECISION DOCUMENT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IN WORKING DAY ON DATE OF DECISION. THEY ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO COLEMAN'S CONCERN TO AVOID ANY PREMATURE PRESS LEAK AND TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN EVENHANDED APPROACH AND THEY ARE PREPARED TO GUARANTEE THAT ANY ADVANCE NOTICE WILL BE TREATED WITH COMPLETE DISCRETION. THEY ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT ANY REASONABLE CONDITIONS (SUCH AS LIMITATION ON READERSHIP) COLEMAN WISHES TO ATTACH TO TREATMENT THEY ACCORD ADVANCE NOTICE.

2. COMMENT: ON AN ISSUE WHICH HAS SUCH OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE TO BRITISH, WE BELIEVE NORMAL DIPLOMATIC COURTESY DEMANDS THAT THEY HAVE NOTICE SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE AND IN ADEQUATE DETAIL TO ENABLE THEM TO REACT TO U.S. DECISION IN INFORMED AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER. THEREFORE, WE UNRESERVEDLY SUPPORT BRITISH REQUEST. WE SUGGEST THAT SPECIAL COURIERS BE SENT TO LONDON AND PARIS ARRIVING IN MORNING HOURS OF FEB. 4 WITH COPIES OF COLEMAN DOCUMENT, ONE COPY OF WHICH WOULD BE DELIVERED TO KAUFMAN SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE OF WASHINGTON ANNOUNCEMENT TO PERMIT HIM TO STUDY COLEMAN PAPER AND PREPARE APPROPRIATE STATEMENT FOR NEWS MEDIA.

3. FOR OUR OWN PURPOSES, EMBASSY ESTIMATES IT WILL NEED APPROXIMATELY 50 COPIES OF DOCUMENT (EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER WASHINGTON ANNOUNCEMENT) TO MEET LOCAL REQUESTS FROM PRESS.

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